



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Office of the Assistant Secretary for
Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
Washington DC 20420

SEP - 3 2019

Mr. CJ Ciaramella
MuckRock News
DEPT MR 59217
411A Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02144

FOIA Request: 18-11313-F

Dear Mr. Ciaramella:

This letter is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated August 8, 2018 which was referred to the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA) on August 29, 2018, in which you seek the following information:

- All communications containing "ProPublica," Arnsdorf, Perlmutter, "Moskowitz," "Sherman," or "Mar-a-Lago" between August 1, 2018 and August 8, 2018, to or from the following officials: VA Secretary Robert Wilkie; General Counsel James Bryne; Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs John Ulyot; and Press Secretary Curt Cashour.

A search for records responsive to your requests has concluded. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs located a total of hundred and fifty-five responsive records that was collected from 2 individual email addresses.

After conducting my review of the responsive records, I identified information contained in the records that we are withholding under FOIA Exemptions (b)(6). U.S.C. § 552(b)(6).

FOIA Exemption 6 permits VA to withhold a document or information within a document if disclosure of the information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of a living individual's personal privacy. Hence, VA may withhold information under FOIA Exemption 6 where disclosure of the information, either by itself or in conjunction with other information available to either the public or the FOIA requester, would result in an unwarranted invasion of an individual's personal privacy without contributing significantly to the public's understanding of the activities of the federal government.

FOIA Exemption 6 permits the Department of Veterans Affairs to withhold from disclosure personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. The information withheld, such as names, address, social security numbers, and personnel email addresses are

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of a type that the privacy interest of the individual(s) to whom this information belongs outweighs any public interest in disclosure of this information. Accordingly, we have determined that this information should be withheld pursuant to Exemption 6.

Accordingly, we are withholding the names of employees who are not high-level government officials, the names of private citizens, and our contractor's email address.

This concludes our office response to your request. In accordance with VA's implementing FOIA regulations 38 CFR § 1.559 (a), (b) and (c), you may appeal this partial denial to:

Office of the General Counsel (024)
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, N.W.
Washington, DC 20420

If you should choose to file an appeal, please include a copy of this letter with your written appeal and clearly indicate the basis for your disagreement with the determination set forth in this response. Please be advised that in accordance with Freedom of Information Act at 5 U.S.C. § 1.552 (aa), your appeal must be posted marked no later than sixty (90) days of the date of this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lyndon B. Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lyndon B. Johnson
Chief of Staff

Enclosure – 155 pages

